

Today's News - Friday, May 21, 2010

- Ouroussoff gives thumbs-up to Lincoln Center's "dazzling lawn with a twist," but finds "a surprising insensitivity to the way bodies flow through space" in much of DS+R's renovation.
- Across the Big Pond, Piano's riotously colorful Central St Giles "achieves a superlative synthesis between architecture and public realm. This is contextual architecture at its very best."
- Glancey on a number of towering developments that are "beginning to reach for the London cloudscape all over again."
- Litt on Cleveland's Medical Mart mall plans: "The drawings are dry and abstract, the details skimpy," but the architect and landscape architect "are clearly thinking outside the rectangle."
- The newest addition to Mexico's Mayan Riviera is a "fetish" hotel with "a mix of urban jungle, red-light district and elegant symmetry" that "inspires strong feelings of awe, interest and disgust - all at once."
- Brussat cheers Centerbrook's "brilliant" Ocean House hotel: "a rather brave endeavor" in being faithful to the past "insofar as 'copying the past' is considered verboten by most architects, architectural historians and even preservationists."
- Is the sketch superior to the computer-generated image? Yes, says Alan Dunlop; no says Alice Scott.
- 2010 AIA/HUD Secretary's Awards for affordable housing design (great presentation).
- An eyeful of NYC's "newest crop of star architects...who might one day be dominating the field."
- Weekend diversions (and lots of 'em!): architects take center stage in two plays in NYC: "The Bilbao Effect": "Oren Safdie has archibabble and legal-speak down pat - and takes both to task" says yours truly; Teachout says it's "both funny and cruelly smart in its portrayal of the lunatic excesses of the more extreme varieties of starchitecture"; and Bernstein thinks a model resembling "a Frank(Gehry)enstein monster of a building...is the play's least terrifying character."
- Rather than choosing "to paint portraits of misunderstood saviors, deluded madmen, or monstres sacre," Finfer takes a more welcome approach to Mies in "The Glass House"; Moore marvels at its "smart writing, intelligent direction," and acting that tell the story of "the cigar chomping, champagne guzzling womanizer Mies van der Rohe and the gay, raspy voiced conniving Philip Johnson."
- "Felipe Dulzaides: Utopia Posible" at Chicago's Graham Foundation revisits Havana's National Art Schools and captures "the structures' alien beauty in a way the few images available online cannot."
- "OMA Book Machine" at London's AA exhibits the "paradox at the heart of Koolhaas' obsession with the book."
- In Montreal, "Yesterday's Tomorrows" has 10 artists in "a discursive dialogue" with Modernist architects and designers.
- Dallas Center for Architecture showcases forgotten modern masterpieces in "Ju-Nel Homes: Dallas Jewels of Mid-Century Modernism."
- Bas Princen's "Refuge, Five Cities" at Storefront for Art and Architecture proves that in the Middle East "the relationship between past and present, order and disorder, is not so neatly defined."
- Dieter Rams stars in Frankfurt: "I think that design has a great responsibility for the future. And I'm always optimistic."
- Stamp's "Britain's Lost Cities: a Chronicle of Architectural Destruction" may be "a very depressing book," but "there are lessons enough here to be learned by those who are not too deaf to listen or too blind to see."
- "Fascismo Abbandonato" presents "some of the weirdest monsters the Modernist century left behind."
- Despite "conceptual problematics and editorial glitches," IAAC's "Self-Fab House" offers an "abundance of optimistic proposals."

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The Greening of Lincoln Center: ...renovation includes a dazzling lawn with a twist, but the new elements don't cohere...a surprising insensitivity to the way bodies flow through space... By Nicolai Ouroussoff -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro [slide show]- New York Times

Beyond the pale: Controversial it may be, but Central St Giles has cheered up an obscure corner of London with a riot of reds, yellows, greens and oranges -- making the rest of the capital look a tad grey...achieves a superlative synthesis between architecture and public realm. This is contextual architecture at its very best. -- Renzo Piano [images]- Building (UK)

Return of the skyscraper shows city on road to recovery: From the cheese-grater to the walkie-talkie, a host of towering developments shows that confidence is back...high-rise buildings...beginning to reach for the London cloudscape all over again. By Jonathan Glancey -- Rafael Viñoly; Rogers Stirk Harbour; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Renzo Piano- Guardian (UK)

Early medical mart and convention center plans preserve lake view: The drawings are dry and abstract, the details skimpy. But architects...are clearly thinking outside the rectangle. By Steven Litt -- LMN Architects; Gustafson Guthrie Nichol [images]- Cleveland Plain Dealer

Playa del Carmen's next trend: fetish hotels? A mix of urban jungle, red-light district and elegant symmetry, Reina Roja Hotel is the newest and most radical addition to...theme-based hotels in the popular beach town along Mexico's Mayan Riviera. -- Alejandro Alarcon Fierro; Angel Islas [images]- GlobalPost

Ocean House proudly copies the past: Razed and raised...Rebuilding the old dowager seemed an unlikely prospect...it was a rather brave endeavor, insofar as "copying the past" is considered verboten by most architects, architectural historians and even preservationists...The diligence...in copying the past was brilliant... By David Brussat -- Centerbrook Architects [images]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Is the sketch superior to the computer-generated image? Yes, says Alan Dunlop, a line drawing lasts the test of time; while Alice Scott/Squint Opera thinks computer rendering is a more powerful tool- BD/Building Design (UK)

2010 AIA/HUD Secretary's Awards: ...recognizes excellence in affordable housing architecture, neighborhood design, participatory design, and accessibility. -- David Baker + Partners; PSL Architects; buildingcommunity WORKSHOP; Tyler Engle Architects [images, info]- AIArchitect

New York's Newest Crop of Star Architects: New York New Practices

Award...a sneak peak at some of the firms who might one day be dominating the field. -- AIA New York; SOFTlab; Tacklebox; Archipelagos; Easton+Comb; Leong Leong; SO-IL; Manifold- Fast Company

"The Bilbao Effect": Laugh. Wince. Rinse. Repeat. Oren Safdie has archibabble and legal-speak down pat - and takes both to task...Any similarity to urban mega-projects, living or dead, is purely intentional. By Kristen Richards - e-Oculus

Not in My Front Yard: "The Bilbao Effect" by Oren Safdie...a furiously farcical debate over the wholly serious subject of the architect's responsibility to the people whose lives he touches...both funny and cruelly smart in its portrayal of the lunatic excesses of the more extreme varieties of starchitecture. - Wall Street Journal

Is the Building at Fault? Who Can Say? "The Bilbao Effect" by Oren Safdie...In the end, a model, built by Safdie to resemble a Frank(Gehry)enstein monster of a building, all jutting angles and outrageous cantilevers, is the play's least terrifying character. By Fred Bernstein - Architect Magazine

"The Glass House": When tackling the life and work of a creative genius, most playwrights choose to paint portraits of misunderstood saviors, deluded madmen, or monstres sacre. But June Finfer takes a more considered - and ultimately more welcome - approach to Mies van der Rohe in her ambitious new play...- Theater Mania

"The Glass House" a new, immensely satisfying one act play written by June Finfer; brilliantly directed by Evan Bergman...smart writing, intelligent direction and four riveting performances that tell the story of two of the most important and influential architects - the cigar chomping, champagne guzzling womanizer Mies van der Rohe and the gay, raspy voiced conniving Philip Johnson....- Oscar E Moore

"Felipe Dulzaides: Utopia Posible": revisits the National Art Schools...on view at the Graham Foundation through July 17...captured the structures' alien beauty in a way the few images available online cannot. And there are no substitutes for the lively interviews with the two architects, both in their mid-80s, who remain determined to finish their projects. -- Ricardo Porro; Vittorio Garatti; Roberto Gottardi- Time Out Chicago

Tomes, sweet tomes: how Rem Koolhaas re-engineered the architecture book: OMA is so prolific with research that it's rumoured to produce a book a day. So what's behind this preoccupation with publishing? "OMA Book Machine" at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London...paradox at the heart of Koolhaas' obsession with the book as a format is that he reveres it and disrespects it in equal measure. By Justin McGuirk -- Office for Metropolitan Architecture- Guardian (UK)

"Yesterday's Tomorrows": 10 artists examine Modernism by establishing a discursive dialogue with a particular Modernist designer or monument. -- Eileen Gray; John Lautner; Mies van der Rohe; Basil Spence; Ernő Goldfinger; Buckminster Fuller; Ludwig Wittgenstein; etc. - Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Forgotten Mid-Century Modern Masterpieces in Spotlight at Dallas Center for Architecture: "Ju-Nel Homes: Dallas Jewels of Mid-Century Modernism"...designs are elegant, simple, and understated...evidence that good design doesn't have to be economically exclusive and that architects with the energy to do so can buck building trends. -- Lyle Rowley and Jack Wilson - D Magazine (Dallas)

When in the World Are We? ...in the Middle East, as demonstrated by Bas Princen's "Refuge, Five Cities" at New York's Storefront for Art and Architecture, the relationship between past and present, order and disorder, is not so neatly defined. [images, links] - Next American City

Less but better: "Less and More: The Design Ethos of Dieter Rams" at the Frankfurt Museum for Applied Art from May 22: ...what many see as blatant rip-off, Rams prefers to consider an homage to his earlier products..."I think that design has a great responsibility for the future. And I'm always optimistic."- The Local (Berlin)

"Britain's Lost Cities: a Chronicle of Architectural Destruction" by Gavin Stamp: ...how planners destroyed Britain...This is, in short, a very depressing book -- but one that is wholly necessary...there are lessons enough here to be learned by those who are not too deaf to listen or too blind to see; and not everything has been lost. Yet. - Guardian (UK)

Mussolini's monsters: Should the Modernist holiday camps of Fascist Italy be saved? They are some of the weirdest monsters the Modernist century left behind..."Fascismo Abbandonato" by Dan Dubowitz, Patrick Duerden and Penny Lewis..."the folly of the Fascist utopia revealed by the intervention of reality, time, dereliction and decay."- Independent (UK)

"Self-Fab House: 2nd Advanced Architecture Contest"...all conceptual problematics and editorial glitches aside, the intention...is to be commended, and the abundance of optimistic proposals is noteworthy...projects that achieved the greatest resolution and depth...used this competition to concentrate on one issue within the

larger self-fab question... By Beth Weinstein -- Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia/IAAC [images, links]- Places Journal

An Open Letter to Susan Szenasy re: Frank Gehry: Susan, I love and admire you. But I think you are wrong... By Fred Bernstein- ArchNewsNow



Under construction: Gehry Partners: New World Symphony, Miami, Florida

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